

ELIZABETH TURK



An abstract sculpture made of dark, thick, curved bands that twist and loop together, creating a complex, cage-like structure. The sculpture is set against a dark background, with light catching the edges of the bands.

E L I Z A B E T H   T U R K

C A G E S

March 1 – 31, 2012

**Hirschl & Adler Modern**

The Crown Building

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New York, New York 10019

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## P R E F A C E

In the four years since Elizabeth Turk's last exhibition with Hirschl & Adler Modern, the extraordinary effort, technical mastery, and unique artistic vision demonstrated in her astonishing marble sculptures have been duly recognized. A 2010 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, followed by a Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation Fellowship and a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, presented the artist with unforeseen opportunities, along with the challenge to push herself, and her medium, to new limits.

The results are seen in this new series of works which she calls *Cages*. In them, Turk continues her dialogue with stone, stretching its limitations through her daring manipulation of form and material. Also at the heart of this exhibition is her core concept: the complex relationship between idea, time, and physical matter.

Turk's sculpture always elicits a visceral response. One cannot help but focus on the breathtaking line, form, and tactile surfaces of the objects themselves, miraculous fusions of fragility and strength. Yet these ambitious new works are equally about what is not seen, prompting us to consider the sculpture conceptually, intellectually, and emotionally. Like symbolic vessels, Turk's *Cages* hold ideas, meanings, energies, and possibilities that extend far beyond the tangible form of the structure itself.

At Hirschl & Adler, special thanks are due to Bill Blatz and Tom Parker. As well, the artist wishes to thank Bill Folan, Jill and Annie Robbins, the Chiarini Family, Memo Memovich, Jose Pedrosa, Eric Risser, Frank Smart, and Ernesto Palermo.

S H E L L E Y   F A R M E R

E L I Z A B E T H   F E L D

D U N H A M   T O W N E N D

Hirschl & Adler Modern

*Cage: Box 3*, 2012

Marble

24 x 8 x 4 in.

cat. 15





## A CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTIST

**SHELLEY FARMER:** *You are calling this body of work Cages. What does a “cage” mean to you?*

**ELIZABETH TURK:** To me, it is a portal to a multitude of complex ideas. These works feel light, free, unbounded, once released from the cage of the original block of marble. Yet, a cage is also a tangible, rigid enclosure, within which something ineffable is confined.

Initially, I was examining the boundaries and limitations of physical form imposed by gravity. I shifted to considering gravity's influence upon the interior, the perceived void within the work. Gravity is a constant that affects every atom on earth. It is this common force that the works expose, as both figurative and literal cages. Drawing subtle distinctions between matter and space, the sculpture raises questions about how we perceive both. So the title *Cages* is an invitation to explore this concept I see as defining us.

**SF:** *Yet several works are open lines, rather than enclosed structures.*

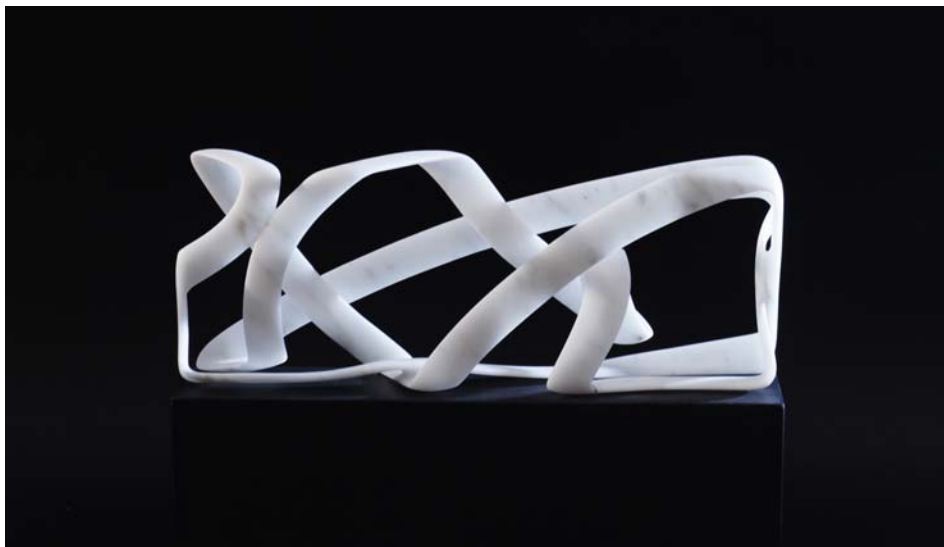
**ET:** True. In some of the pieces, the line is embedded in natural stone. Here the manipulation of the marble is the cage—the cage of human will—contrasted with the beauty of untouched material. In fact, there are several conceptual boundaries probed and questioned: those between a cage and a nest, those defining lightness in weight, the emptiness in solids, the possibility of a single line defining volume, of space being expanded by reflection, and even the question as to whether infinity is infinite, if identified by tangible loops. The boundary is never exact. It is this negotiated edge that stimulates the thoughtful questions of a particular meaning for a “cage.”

*Elizabeth Turk in her studio with  
Cage: Infinity Column 4, cat. 11*

Cage: Box 4, 2012  
Marble  
5½ x 14½ x 3 in.  
cat. 16



Cage: Box 5, 2012  
Marble  
5½ x 14½ x 3 in.  
cat. 17



SF: *Cages is your third exhibition with Hirschl & Adler Modern, following The Collars (2006) and Ribbons (2008). Is there an intended relationship among the three bodies of work?*

ET: Yes, everything is related. I arrive at the conclusion of a series when I start envisioning new sets of parameters. *Collars* repeated basic shapes to form intricate matrices inspired by nature's systems. *Ribbons* examined the geometry and balance of curves as streams caught in a moment. Now, *Cages* explores the tangible forms surrounding and highlighting the emptiness of the space within.

SF: *The marble chosen for these cages often has imperfections. Why do you carve flawed stone when you could travel to quarries and select perfect pieces?*

ET: My father, trained as a geologist, inspired in me a passion for uncovering stories, both human and geological. Whether rust stains or bubbles, these notations of history are trapped inside the blocks of marble I carve. Yet, it is only after the work is complete that I trace a sculpture's background, often traveling to the quarry of origin. My marks simply add another chapter to the stone's life story.

SF: *You push this stone to its limits. As a result, your sculptures often provoke anxiety for the viewer. Why go so far?*

ET: True, the fragility of these works causes simultaneous awe and anxiety. Isn't this what the sublime is about? Such emotions confirm the sculpture is understood sensually as well as intellectually. The extreme fragility is the conclusion of a precise and rigorous series of decisions. The completed sculpture can survive only in the stewardship of others. For me, this is a hopeful act—acknowledging the significance of strangers—and reinforcing and validating my connection to them. It is a risk to create, to exhibit, and to own this body of work. Yet, in these daring acts, disposability mixes with stewardship, loss, and legacy.



Cage: Box 7 in Elizabeth Turk's studio, cat. 19





*Cage: Box 8* (interior view)

*Cage: Box 8*, 2012  
Marble  
22½ x 17 x 10 in.  
cat. 20

*sf:* You spend hundreds of hours on a single sculpture. What emotions do you experience during the physical process of this work?

*ET:* My work is a study of extremes—of passion, of focus—and the process is both internal and external. I go through many emotions as I struggle with the several hundred pounds of solid rock before me. At the start, I am aggressive, grinding and cutting. Later, I become more contemplative, as I finish, sanding and refining for months.

*sf:* You also devote a tremendous amount of time to your drawings, your sketchbooks. How does drawing factor into your sculptural work?

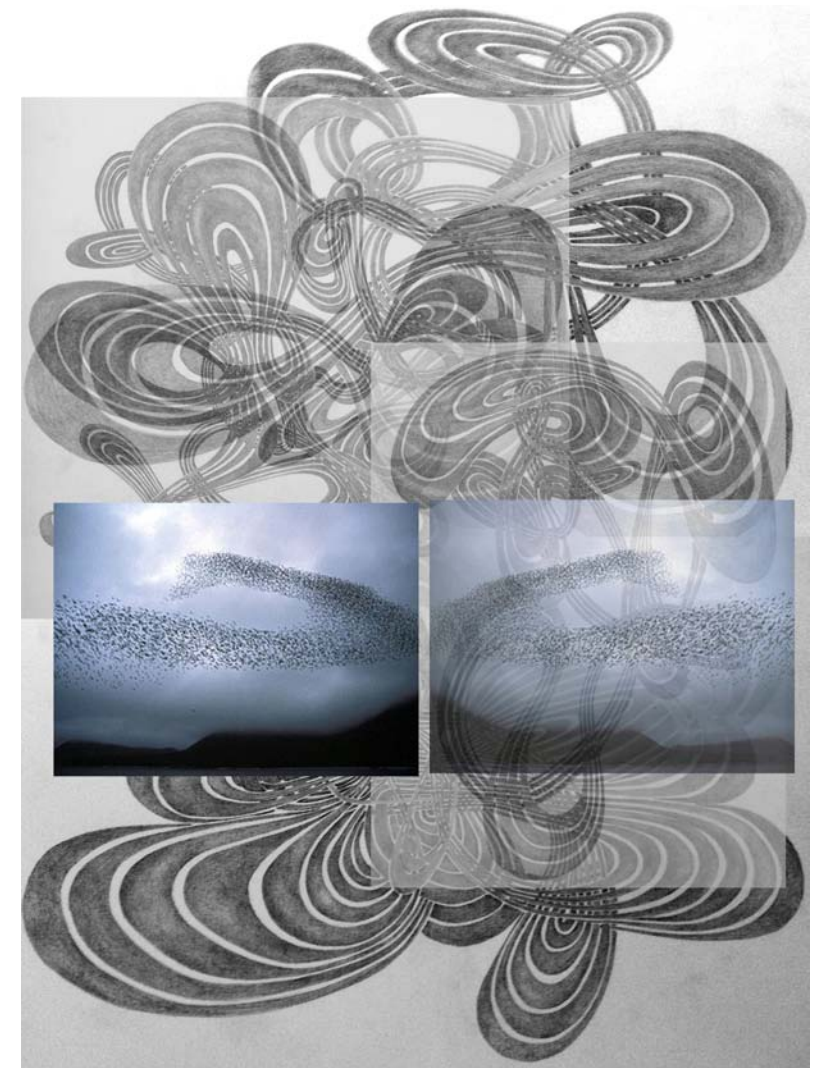
*ET:* Drawing is a passion. When physically exhausted after carving, I withdraw to a clean, quiet, delicate world of graphite or ink. The precision and the repetition are a meditation. In this action, my mind is finally at rest. When I am not carving, the excess energy motivates strong, aggressive charcoal drawings. I like to use bleach to alter the surface so that the dialog is subtractive as well as additive. This parallels my carving process.



*Flocks. Motion Pathways, 2012*

Ink on aluminum

14 x 12 in.



*Cage: Still Life. Sphere 3, 2011*

Marble

8 in. diameter

cat. 3



LEFT

*Cage: Infinity Column 3, 2012*

Marble

30 x 4½ x 4½ in.

cat. 10





*Cage: Box 6 (interior view)*

*Cage: Box 6, 2012*

Marble

15 x 20 x 15 in.

cat. 18

*SF: Because of your chosen medium, marble, there is a temptation to compare your work to artists of the past, to Neo-classical sculptors. However, we view your work through a contemporary lens. Are there artists working today who inspire you?*

**ET:** Though I admire Neo-classical art, and I feel connected to a historical dialogue, I work primarily from a contemporary point of reference. I admire many of my contemporaries. Richard Serra for his ongoing exploration of weight, balance, and gravity. His carving of space is always fresh, scary, and provocative. Chuck Close for reinventing the tradition of portraiture and blending the contemporary with the traditional. Andy Goldsworthy for the sublime beauty of his work; its temporal, yet eternal, nature. And, of course, Anish Kapoor. His work pursues a parallel path of inquiry into emptiness and "the void."







Cage: *Pediment*, 2012    Marble, in two parts    LEFT: 18½ x 32 x 9½ in.    RIGHT: 19 x 32 x 10½ in.    cat. 21



*Cage: Will & Intention 1, 2012*  
Marble and metaquartzitic  
6 x 20 x 9 in.  
cat. 23

*Cage: Balance, 2012*  
Marble, in two parts  
15 x 11 x 5 in.  
13 x 5 x 5 in.  
cat. 22



*SF: Since your last show with Hirschl & Adler Modern, you were awarded a MacArthur Fellowship, a Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation Fellowship, and a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. How have these awards shaped your approach to this body of work?*

*ET: I have more freedom to explore ideas that would have remained in my sketchbooks. I have expanded my studio to play with scale and materials. Most importantly, now people are considering my work from the perspective of the humanities. This is exciting to me, as it resonates with what inspires me.*

*SF: Where does your work go from here?*

*ET: In every exhibition there are clues as to what will follow, though unknown to me at the time of the show. I would guess that the next series will explore the combination of carved and raw stones. I am fascinated by the dialogue between human intention and the natural world. Where is THAT boundary? As Cézanne said, "To my mind one does not put oneself in place of the past, one only adds a new link."*



## CATALOGUE



*Cage: Still Life. Sphere 2, 2011*  
Marble  
9 in. diameter  
cat. 2

*All dimensions in inches,  
height x width x depth*

1  
*Cage: Still Life. Box 2, 2011*  
Marble,  
13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 6 in.  
With marble base,  
26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 6 in.

2  
*Cage: Still Life. Sphere 2, 2011*  
Marble,  
9 in. diameter  
With marble base,  
13 x 13 x 11 in.  
*Illustrated p. 18*

3  
*Cage: Still Life. Sphere 3, 2011*  
Marble,  
8 in. diameter  
With marble base,  
11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 11*

4  
*Knot 1, 2011*  
Marble,  
4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 13 x 4 in.  
With dolomite and  
stainless steel base,  
17 x 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 9 in.

5  
*Line #2, 2011*  
Marble,  
3 x 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
With marble base,  
9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.

6  
*Line #3, 2011*  
Marble,  
2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
With marble base,  
10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 10 x 11<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 20*

7  
*Line #4, 2011*  
Marble,  
2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
With marble base,  
13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 5 x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 20*

8  
*Line #5, 2012*  
Marble,  
2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8 x 3 in.  
With marble base,  
8 x 8 x 8 in.

9  
*Cage: Infinity Column 2, 2012*  
Marble,  
22 x 4 x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
With marble base,  
34 x 5 x 5 in.  
*Illustrated pp. 19, 22*

10  
*Cage: Infinity Column 3, 2012*  
Marble,  
30 x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
With marble base,  
67 x 5 x 5 in.  
*Illustrated p. 10*

RIGHT

*Cage: Infinity Column 2, 2012*  
Marble  
22 x 4 x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
cat. 9





11  
*Cage: Infinity Column 4, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 70 x 4 x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 4*

12  
*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 1, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite,  
 17 x 12 x 9 in.  
*Illustrated p. 21*

13  
*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 2, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite,  
 18 x 12 x 8 in.  
*Illustrated p. 21*

14  
*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 3, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite,  
 16 x 9 x 12 in.  
*Illustrated p. 21*



TOP  
*Line #4, 2011*  
 Marble  
 2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 9<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
 cat. 7

BOTTOM  
*Line #3, 2011*  
 Marble  
 2<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
 cat. 6

15  
*Cage: Box 3, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 24 x 8 x 4 in.  
 With slate base,  
 84 x 8 x 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 2*

16  
*Cage: Box 4, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 3 in.  
 With slate base,  
 14 x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 6*

17  
*Cage: Box 5, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 3 in.  
 With slate base,  
 14 x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.  
*Illustrated p. 6*

18  
*Cage: Box 6, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 15 x 20 x 15 in.  
 With stainless steel base,  
 52<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 20 x 15 in.  
*Illustrated pp. 12, 13*

19  
*Cage: Box 7, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 20 x 15 x 15 in.  
 With stainless steel base,  
 63 x 15 x 15 in.  
*Illustrated cover, p. 7*

# LEFT TO RIGHT

*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 3, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite  
 16 x 9 x 12 in.  
 cat. 14

*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 2, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite  
 18 x 12 x 8 in.  
 cat. 13

*Cage: Will & Intention: Column 1, 2012*  
 Marble and dolomite  
 17 x 12 x 9 in.  
 cat. 12



20  
*Cage: Box 8, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 17 x 10 in.  
 With stainless steel base,  
 59<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 17 x 10 in.  
*Illustrated pp. 8, 9*

21  
*Cage: Pediment, 2012*  
 Marble, in two parts,  
 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 32 x 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
 19 x 32 x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
 With stainless steel base,  
 79<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 65 x 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
*Illustrated pp. 14, 15*

22  
*Cage: Balance, 2012*  
 Marble, in two parts,  
 15 x 11 x 5 in.  
 13 x 5 x 5 in.  
 With stainless steel base,  
 60 x 18 x 13 in.  
*Illustrated p. 16*

23  
*Cage: Will & Intention 1, 2012*  
 Marble and metaquartzitic,  
 6 x 20 x 9 in.  
*Illustrated p. 17*

24  
*Cage: Will & Intention 2, 2012*  
 Marble,  
 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 10 x 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.  
 With sandstone base,  
 8 x 14 x 8 in.





ELIZABETH TURK

Born

1961 Pasadena, California

Education

1994 M.F.A., Rinehart School of Sculpture,  
Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD

1983 B.F.A., International Relations, Scripps College,  
Claremont, CA

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2008 *Elizabeth Turk: Recent Sculpture*, Hirschl & Adler Modern,  
New York, NY

*Traces*, Bandini Art, Culver City, CA

2006 *Elizabeth Turk: The Collars*, Hirschl & Adler Modern,  
New York, NY

*Drawings*, Joie Lassiter Gallery, Charlotte, NC

2004 *VantagePoint III Elizabeth Turk The Collars:  
Tracings of Thought*, Mint Museum of Art,  
Charlotte, NC

2003 *(Know) Fly Zone*, Installation, Santa Ana, CA

2001 *A Memorial to Nature I, An Installation by  
Elizabeth Turk*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum,  
Santa Barbara, CA

1998 *Elizabeth Turk*, Hemphill Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Selected Group Exhibitions

2011 *Masterworks: The Best of Hirschl & Adler*,  
Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York, NY

*Loose Canon*, LA Louver, Venice, CA

2008 *Modern Love: Gifts to the Collection from Heather and  
Tony Podesta*, National Museum of Women in the Arts,  
Washington, D.C.

*Looky See*, Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis School of Art,  
Los Angeles, CA

*Celebrating Women Artists*, Hirschl & Adler Modern,  
New York, NY

*Poetry & Works on Paper*, Joie Lassiter Gallery,  
Charlotte, NC

2006 *Complicit*, University of Virginia Art Museum,  
Charlottesville, VA

*Draw, Paper, Scissors*, Jeanne Patterson, Los Angeles, CA

2003 *Matter and Matrix*, Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery,  
Scripps College, Claremont, CA

*Going Public*, American Institute of Architecture,  
New York, NY

2002 Japan Bank Building, Hiroshima, Japan,  
collaboration with Koso Haranka and Kirara Kawauchi

2000 *New York—Classicism—Now*, Hirschl & Adler Galleries,  
New York, NY

1998 *Objectivity-International Objects of Subjectivity*,  
Contemporary Art Center, Virginia Beach, VA

1997 *From Here*, Baumgartner Gallery, Washington, D.C.

*A Sculpture Show*, Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD

1996 *Louis Bourgeois: Elizabeth Turk*, Baumgartner Gallery,  
Washington, D.C.

*A Sculpture Show*, Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD

*Superbia*, Washington Project for the Arts,  
Washington, D.C.

Grants, Residencies, Awards, and Fellowships

2011 Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship

2010 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship

Barnett & Annalee Newman Foundation Fellowship

2009 Lux Art Institute, Artist in Residence, Encinitas, CA

2008 Pilchuck, Artist in Residence, Seattle, WA

2003 McColl Center for Visual Art, Artist in Residence,  
Charlotte, NC

2002 Kyojima Artist in Residency Program, Tokyo, Japan

Ensemble Studio Theater, Artist in Residence (Summer),  
New York, NY

2001 California State University Fullerton, Artist in Residence,  
Fullerton, CA

2000 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant

New York City Art Commission Award for Excellence  
in Design

John Michael Kohler Arts & Industry Program,  
Artist in Residence, Sheboygan, WI

1994 Amalie Rothschild Award

Selected Public Collections

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Weatherspoon Gallery, University of North Carolina at  
Greensboro, NC

The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC

Scripps College, Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Claremont, CA

The Bechtler Art Museum, Charlotte, NC

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

Cage: Infinity Column 2 (detail), cat. 9



*Elizabeth Turk in her studio, 2012*

#### DESIGN

Elizabeth Finger

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

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© Eric Stoner: pp. 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11  
(*Sphere 3*), 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 24

© Elizabeth Turk: cover, pp. 10, 11  
(*Flocks*), 17, 19, 21, 22

#### PRINTING

The Studley Press

#### COVER

*Cage: Box 7*, 2012

Marble

20 x 15 x 15 in.

cat. 19

#### INSIDE / FRONT COVERS

*Cage: Box 8*, 2012 (detail)

Marble

22½ x 17 x 10 in.

cat. 20

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ISBN 978-1-937941-00-0

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